

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-6 are pending and stand rejected. Claims 2 and 7-11 have been canceled.

Claims 1 and 3-6 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) over Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,630,960). Applicants traverse this rejection.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite dividing the image into a plurality of areas, determining the exposure parameters in each of the areas, and then individually correcting each area according to the determined exposure parameters. Takahashi does not disclose or suggest the recited features.

As explained in col. 5, line 52, through col. 6, line 35, Takahashi teaches a method and apparatus in which a “phototaking mode” is selected by a user. The phototaking mode lets the user choose the type of picture that is to be taken, such as a portrait or a landscape. The apparatus of Takahashi then uses light metering to determine exposure parameters of an image before the picture is taken. A “weighting” of the photometry area (shown in Figures 7 and 8) is then assigned according to the selected phototaking mode, and the determined exposure areas are adjusted and integrated according to the weighting. The results of the integration are then processed and used to control the iris aperture, the shutter speed, and the gain during image capture. By adjusting these three parameters, Takahashi affects the exposure of the entire image.

In Takahashi, specific areas of the image are not “corrected” as recited in claim 1. The adjusted phototaking parameters can not be used to correct specific areas of the image, but must be used to control the exposure of the whole image. Takahashi uniformly affects the entire image according to an integrated weighted average of the metered parameters. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1 and are therefore also allowable.

Applicants have amended claim 5 to recite correcting the image “to optimize a hue or contrast in the specific area.” As detailed above, Takahashi cannot correct a specific area. Furthermore, Takahashi does not disclose or suggest correcting a hue or contrast of an image. Claim 5 is allowable.

Claim 6 recites "correcting each of said plurality of divided areas individually according to a distribution of brightness in the image, as determined by the metering process." The Examiner cites col. 8, lines 11-23, as disclosing correcting each of a plurality of divided areas individually, however, this portion of Takahashi merely discloses adjusting the phototaking parameters as detailed above. Claim 6 is allowable.

The Examiner rejected claims 7 and 8 under 35 USC 102(e) over Fukuda (U.S. Patent No. 6,091,908). Applicants have canceled claims 7 and 8. This rejection is moot.

The Examiner rejected claim 9 under 35 USC 103(a) over Fukuda. Applicants have canceled claim 9. This rejection is moot.

Applicants solicit an early action allowing claims 1 and 3-6.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief, including extensions of time, and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing our Docket No. **325772023800**.

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Respectfully submitted,

By: Adam Keser
Adam Keser
Registration No. 54,217
Morrison & Foerster LLP
1650 Tysons Boulevard, Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102
Telephone: (703) 760-7301